

STATEMENT of

**Daniel Rung
Founder
Grokster, Ltd.**

On File Sharing and Pornography

Before the

**Committee on Government Reform
United States House of Representatives**

FILE SHARING AND PORNOGRAPHY

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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, My name is Daniel Rung. I am the founder of Grokster, one of the more popular file sharing programs on the Internet today. I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify today on file sharing and pornography and, in particular, child pornography.

The Internet is a communications tool that allows for the easy storage and virtually instantaneous transfer of all types of information, including pornographic material. The Internet pornographic industry is generally considered to be one of most successful and widespread on the Internet. One could argue that pornography is ubiquitous on the Internet. One of the side effects of this ready availability of pornographic material is children's easy access to it, either intentionally or accidentally.

Before the development of peer to peer file sharing programs, pornography could be easily found on free and pay websites, usenet news groups, ftp sites, and so on. Many fairly effective tools were then developed to allow users to filter out certain types of Internet content including pornography. Then peer to peer file sharing programs were developed and launched on the Internet.

Although these file sharing programs were not designed with pornography in mind, today's file sharing programs provide a new avenue of access to this type of material. Since today's file sharing programs have no control over the contents that users share with other users, it is easy for a child user to encounter such pornographic material.

It has been estimated that as much as fifty percent of the files traded through file sharing programs consist of pornographic material. And unfortunately, just like the rest of the Internet, some unknown amount of that material is child pornography.

In an attempt to allow users to filter out objectionable material, many file sharing programs now have “bad word” filters. These filters can be set to screen out much objectionable material from the search results. Additionally, the providers of third party content filtering programs, such as Net Nanny and CyberSitter, have been successfully developing techniques to allow users to filter or block objectionable material from file sharing programs.

So, what specifically can parents do to keep this material from their children?

First, educate your children, as appropriate for their age, to be aware that this type of material exists and what to do if they should encounter it.

Second, supervise your children while they are using the Internet. Observe what websites they visit and what programs they are using.

Third, consider restricting your children’s level of user access on the computer. Using settings in the Windows operating system, parent’s can create a special account for each child called a “restricted user” account. This “restricted user” account has default settings that will block the child from installing any software on the computer, including peer to peer file sharing programs. I understand these “restricted user” accounts may also be customized to allow varying amounts of access to all the functions in the Windows operating system.

Fourth, install and properly configure one of the numerous content filtering programs. Some can be set to filter or even block access to file sharing programs. Periodically, review the programs installed on the computer to ensure they meet your approval.

Last, when installing any file sharing software, go through all of its settings to ensure that they are set to block any objectionable material. Set up the password protection if it is available on that program.

To summarize: Educate. Supervise. Restrict. Filter. Configure.

As a parent and grandparent, I share this committee’s concern with child pornographers and their customers. We at Grokster maintain a very clear and open policy in relation to child porn, “We do not want child pornography on Grokster.” We encourage users to report this type of material to the appropriate authorities. We have previously cooperated with law enforcement officers and will gladly do so again to combat child pornography.

Sadly, child pornography continues to be available throughout the Internet. There are already many existing laws that deal with child pornography. Using these laws, child pornographers and their customers can be brought to justice to stop their abuse of defenseless children. The law enforcement resources brought to bear on this problem seem to be too little. I urge the members of this committee to bring more law enforcement resources to bear on this continuing problem.

Thank you for holding this important hearing, and I look forward to working with the committee on these issues.